

Emergency Funding to Support Victim Services

Questions and Answers – 4.6.20 FINAL

Q: Is there a PowerPoint presentation or recorded webinar from April 2 available?

A: Yes. Both can be found on [MOVA's website](#).

Q: Can we apply for \$50,000 to be used until the end of FY20 and then another \$50,000 to use for FY21?

A: The \$50,000 is for the duration of April 1, 2020-June 30, 2021 (i.e. last quarter of FY20 and FY21). The unspent amount in FY20 will rollover into FY21 for this emergency contract (not for regular VOCA contracts). If your agency would like to request funds in excess of \$50,000.00, please do so in writing. We will consider additional requests on a case-by-case basis if funding is available.

Q: Under agency support costs, does this mean that we can ask for money to cover staff internet cost at home and other utilities?

A: Reimbursements to personnel for use of personal technology at home (such as internet and phone costs) is allowable, however funds to support utilities (such as electric costs) for staff are not.

Q: Will the funding we apply for in response to the Emergency RFR have to be spent by June 30th even if staffing issues, remote work needs etc. extend beyond June?

A: This funding will run for the duration of April 1, 2020 - June 30, 2021. While we are asking for a FY20 and a FY21 budget separately, any unspent dollars will roll into FY21.

Q: Will it be allowable to buy things like cell phones and grocery store cards for clients if we purchase them before June 30th but don't give them to a client until after the 30th?

A: Yes.

Q: What is the process for requesting a match waiver?

A: We are allowing agencies to either request a full match waiver, or to not request a match waiver. There is no partial match waiver for these funds. If you would like to move forward with requesting a full match waiver, simply complete the funding request form without match. We will ask additional questions upon contracting.

Q: I understand a short narrative is required. Is that just the narrative in the budget narrative (under each category) or something additional (An application with a narrative)?

A: For the narrative – we are looking for the funding request form to have the usual details in the budget narrative. In addition, we are asking for an additional attachment which outlines the costs you are requesting and supporting information on the reason for the costs being requested.

Q: We currently have a SAFEPLAN contract and multiple VOCA contracts. Can we submit one grant for all extra funds, or do we have to do separate grants for each contract - SAFEPLAN and the VOCA contracts?

A: Yes, submit one grant. These funds are available per agency (not per program). Each agency is eligible to apply for up to \$50,000.00. While you have multiple VOCA/SAFEPLAN programs, you are eligible to apply for one award of up to \$50,000.00. This award can support multiple programs and the request should be submitted on one budget.

Q: I am assuming we will need to use technology funds in our current contracts first, but some things were not in the contract, such as paying for internet service at an employee's home office. If that is allowable, how do we prorate the cost, as most of our employees have internet at home already?

A: Reimbursements to personnel for use of personal technology at home and technology which would allow staff to provide services virtually/remotely are allowable. When reimbursing staff for these costs, a flat rate reimbursement for staff on their internet and/or phone bill would be allowable. We require each agency to have a policy related to these reimbursements.

Q: When the emergency funds rolls into the FY21 fiscal year will a budget modification be allowed? For example, no one has asked for a paid leave now. But in maybe in a month we have a few staff request paid leave under our policies, could we do a budget modification to accommodate that?

A: Yes, budget amendments will be allowed as they are with current VOCA/SAFEPLAN grants, and you will be able to request a budget amendment when the fiscal year changes over, which can include any of the allowable emergency costs we've outlined.

Q: Can we use these funds for other non VOCA program clients in our agency – who are victims of domestic abuse?

A: Yes, these funds can be used to support victims and victim services across your agency, as long as the activity/service/cost/item is VOCA allowable.

Q: Can you offer more guidance on what kind of documentation (e.g. receipts?) MOVA will require regarding usage of funds?

A: Backup documentation requirements will follow your current VOCA/SAFEPLAN awards.

Q: Are we submitting this extra funding as a separate request from the FY20 & FY21 VOCA or do we need to combine our original FY20 & FY21 request form with the additional emergency funds?

A: Yes, this funding will be separate from your current FY20 contract (and your FY21 VOCA award). This funding will have a separate contract, budget and expenditure report.

Q: Is there a reporting requirement for this procurement or will it be audited during a site visit?

A: We will be sending out more guidance on reporting post award, and any funds will be included in future monitoring visits.

Q: Does payments to hotels for emergency shelter count as a covered expense?

A: Yes.

Q: Would it be allowable to use the emergency funding for staff in programs funded by different agencies?

A: No. This funding is not to support staff, an agency or programming outside of the currently funded VOCA/SAFEPLAN agency.

Q: If we apply for a match waiver and are denied, would we have an opportunity to resubmit our budget with match?

A: Yes, you would.

Q: On the call today, you mentioned that agencies applying for a match waiver would need to submit additional supporting materials later on in the process. What supporting materials will be needed?

A: In the past we have requested that agencies submit a letter on agency letterhead which outlines the amount of match being requested waived, along with a justification as to why a match contribution is a hardship. We have not determined the exact information we will request just yet, but we anticipate it to be a similar process.

Q: Does this waiver require federal approval?

A: We have recently created a policy, which has been approved by OVC, which allows MOVA to approve the requests.

Q: Do we submit separate budget request forms for SAFEPLAN and VOCA in accordance with each program's individual needs?

A: No. While you have multiple funded programs, there will be only one application per agency.

Q: Can we request up to 50K per program?

A: The \$50,000.00 is a cap for the application, which will cover multiple programs.

Q: If my agency is planning on submitting an application for emergency funding, do I need to also send you an email with an intent to apply?

A: No, there is no intent to apply form connected to the emergency funding. The attachment on our website was a notice to the Commonwealth that we were intending to award these funds on an emergency basis (outside of a competitive procurement).

Q: I have exceeded the 75% direct/25% administrative split – is this okay?

A: Yes. We are waiving the 75% direct/25% administrative requirement for this grant. If the cells turn red on your funding request form, please disregard.

Q: Should we provide a copy of our current budget on the FY20 budget forms that MOVA sent to agencies?

A: For the emergency funding, this will be a separate contract with a separate budget and expenditure report. You do not need to include your current FY20 budget in the funding request. Include only the new costs you are requesting under this emergency funding opportunity, which will run from April 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021.

Q: Should we increase the FY20 budget by the expenses incurred during the epidemic?

A: While you may request a budget amendment to your current FY20 budget, you cannot increase the total award.

Q: Should we also increase the FY21 budget in case the epidemic has not been resolved by July 1, 2020?

A: FY21/FY22 awards are still pending. We anticipate the board will vote mid-April. While there cannot be changes to those awards, this emergency opportunity will run from April 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021.

Q: Could we add other categories to our FY20 budget such as hotel costs, supplies, and travel that is not on current budget?

A: Yes, if you would like to request a budget amendment to your current FY20 budget to move funds to add an allowable cost category this is allowable. However, you will not be able to increase your current FY20 award amount.

Q: We are looking at how best to get emergency financial resources to clients, including exploring Venmo and PayPal which would allow us to transfer cash to clients, rather than doing gift cards. Would this be allowable with VOCA funds (currently contracted or under the emergency funding)?

A: At the moment, Venmo/PayPal transactions would be considered unallowable and direct cash assistance is unallowable at this time. Please only include current VOCA allowable expenses found in the policies and procedures. Understanding there may be some grey areas considering the circumstances, we are happy to provide technical assistance as requests come in.

Q: Can you provide the link to register for the webinar?

A: <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/7140672019764001803>

Q: Is there a specific form or document we should use for the narrative, or can it just be a word or pdf document sent along with the budget worksheet?

A: There is no template for the narrative – a word document or PDF will be fine.

Q: In the notice regarding applications for the Covid-19 emergency procurement funding, it says, "a match waiver may be requested." Does this mean that a match is expected, but agencies may request a waiver?

A: That is correct. Because these are VOCA funds, if you do not request a match waiver, it is expected that a full match contribution be provided. Requesting a match waiver does not impact the outcome your application.

Q: What's the time period for the funding? Is it through Sept 30? June 30?

A: The time period for the funding is April 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021. While we are requesting two separate FY budgets, any unspent funding will roll into FY21.

Q: Can funding be used to support staff who are not already on MOVA contract?

A: This is correct. You may request funds to support the agency as long as the services/costs being provided are VOCA allowable. Additionally, please keep in mind these funds should supplement and not supplant existing funding.

Q: Are we submitting a revised FY20/21 budget to reflect ADDITIONAL costs associated with COVID-19, or a separate budget showing the specific additional costs?

A: This is a separate funding opportunity – there will be a separate budget/expenditure report and contract.

Q: If we have a match waiver already, do we need to submit another match waiver request specific to the emergency funds?

A: If you would like to request a match waiver for the emergency funds (full only, no partial), you should complete the funding request form which does not have a match section. We will request additional information during contracting.

Q: Will the funding cover the purchase of laptops and cell phones for our clinical team that is now working remotely providing telehealth and video sessions via zoom?

A: Yes.

Q: Will the funding cover the purchase of gift cards for clients to purchase diapers, groceries and other essential items and educational apps for their children?

A: Yes.

Q: Could the amendment to the current budgets include reimbursement for personal internet and phone use for remote workers?

A: Reimbursement costs would be allowable for your SAFEPLAN/VOCA staff within your current budgets and it is also allowable to request this cost (for additional staff) via the emergency funding.

Q: When writing up the budget, when including bonuses, should we list each person out individually or could it be listed as X Employees at a rate of \$Y.

A: You can use one line and list as bonuses for X employees and the rate. In the narrative which will accompany the funding request, please provide the staff information there.

Q: If we request a FY20 budget amendment to move costs into a client services line, can those costs be used across the agency, or only for our SAFEPLAN program?

A: Any funds in your currently approved FY20 SAFEPLAN budget should be used for SAFEPLAN.

Q: Is the emergency funding available only to survivors who can be served by the VOCA program as written for the grant?

A: This funding can be used across your agency to support staff and survivors as long as the service/cost/item is VOCA allowable.

Q: One possible area is bonus payments to staff – are these only the staff written into the VOCA funded program?

A: This funding can be used across your agency to support staff and survivors as long as the service/cost/item is VOCA allowable.

Q: Is there any way to use VOCA direct assistance to support employees of VOCA funded programs?

A: It would be allowable to keep staff on the payroll and provide bonuses/incentives.

Q: Can we give hazard and incentive pay to our current staff that we are using temporarily in areas we normally don't and aren't VOCA funded? For example, we can't hire from temp agencies to work in our shelters, we need to have them trained which is extensive and can't be done quickly - so we've repurposed some staff. Can we request emergency funding to offer incentives and hazard pay for this? Also, are these funds agency wide, or for VOCA funded staff solely?

A: Yes, this would be allowable under the emergency funding. I would remind you that these funds are designed to supplement and not supplant. The emergency funding can support victim services programming across your agency, as long as the activity/service/cost/item is VOCA allowable.

Q: How do we go about requesting the emergency funding? Is there a special form or do we send an email etc?

A: In order to request access to these emergency funds, an agency should submit to movagrants@mass.gov by Wednesday April 8, 2020:

1. A FY20 (April 1, 2020-June 30, 2020)/FY21 (July 1, 2020-June 30, 2021) funding request form (available on the [MOVA website](#))
 - A match waiver may be requested
2. A brief narrative which outlines the costs being requested, along with the reasons for the costs being requested.

Q: Is the funding amount of up to \$50,000 spread across FY 20 and 21?

A: Yes, the maximum of \$50,000.00 covers April 1, 2020 - June 30, 2021. We are asking you to split the requests into FY20 and FY21, but the unspent funding will rollover into FY21.

Q: When will we hear about FY21 VOCA and SAFEPLAN funding decisions?

A: We have a virtual board meeting scheduled on April 15. Award notifications will go out in the days following the vote.

Q: What is involved in requesting funds beyond the \$50,000.00 cap?

A: E-mail Kristin.potrikus3@mass.gov with your intentions by the end of the day on April 3.

Q: Can we increase our fringe rate to include health-related employee incentives?

A: Yes, as long as they are VOCA allowable costs.

Q: We would like to request funds to cover the potential need for extra relief staff coverage, if our regular staff are out. Under Personnel and "Employee Name," could we write "Relief staff" since we wouldn't know in advance which staff would be working or exactly how many hours?

A: Yes, you could do this in the funding request form. In the narrative which will accompany the funding request, please provide any known information there.

Q: Can these funds support staff who are not currently funded by our current VOCA grant?

A: Correct. These funds can support staff agency wide, as long as the activity/service/cost is VOCA allowable. Keep in mind, these funds should supplement and not supplant.

Q: Is it correct that the requirement that only 25% of funds can pay for administrative costs is waived?

A: Yes. There is no 75% direct/25% administrative split requirement for these funds.

Q: If we have already started the transition to a new phone system (since the COVID-19 crisis began) that better supports remote work can we ask for funds to pay the monthly fees?

A: Yes, this would be allowable.

Q: Can we write consultants into the budget as well? For example, our team is using our clinical supervisor more due to the added stress, and we are hoping to use a consultant that we have for another project to do additional direct services, as we have a growing wait list.

A: Yes, we would consider a consultant to support clinical direct services – as long as they are VOCA allowable.

Q: Is there a cap on funds per client?

A: We have not set a cap, that would be up to the individual agencies.

Q: Do client assistance funds need to go to 3rd party vendors, or can this restriction be relaxed under the circumstances and be paid directly to clients?

A: Cash cannot be provided directly to clients

Q: Some clients' circumstances necessitate cash to cover expenses. Can we provide a check directly to clients?

A: Checks cannot be provided directly to clients, unless it is made out to the vendor (for example: Verizon, T-Mobile, National Grid, etc)

Q: Could we cover a client's car payment?

A: No. This is federally unallowable.

Q: If we were to make purchases ahead of when we are notified of funding, would ISAs/contracts include language allowing us to be reimbursed for expenses back to April 1?

A: Yes. If awarded funding, you will be able to be reimbursed for expenses incurred on April 1, 2020 and later.

Q: Can we add a (part-time) administrative personnel to oversee emergency client assistance?

A: No.

Q: When applying for funding for payment of increased salaries to staff (working during the crisis) do we list each of the Advocates by name under Personnel costs or can we just write: "additional compensation for staff/ Shelter Advocates working during pandemic". We can explain in the narrative number of staff and how we came to the calculation.

A: Yes, you can use one line in the funding request. In the narrative which will accompany the funding request, please provide the staff/dollar amount and other relevant information there.

Q: Can paper, postage, and office supplies be added into the request? This would include paper products and other office consumables that are essential in providing assistance to clients while working remotely.

A: Yes.

Q: Under allowable costs for personnel, can we include IT staff (internal) as well as remote IT support to help MOVA funded staff?

A: No.

Q: With this funding, are organizations allowed to pay for internet service for MOVA funded staff at their homes and if so, will that be allowed to be included, moving forward, in the renewal applications for SAFEPLAN and VOCA?

A: Yes, this is allowable. When reimbursing staff for these costs, a flat rate reimbursement for staff on their internet and/or phone bill would be allowable. We encourage each agency to have a policy related to these reimbursements. This funding will run through June 30, 2021 (FY21), which is parallel to the pending FY21 SAFEPLAN/VOCA awards.

Q: We would like to include a percentage of time our compliance & billing manager works on managing the MOVA grant. Is this salary and fringe allowable?

A: No. This would not be allowable under this grant.

Q: Regarding fringe for Advocates who are part time and temporarily working increased hours - are we calculating the additional fringe only on the additional hours?

A: Correct. Fringe is a percentage calculated against the time on MOVA's budget. Keep in mind these funds should supplement and not supplant.

Q: We are looking at renting two apartments to serve as a temporary extension of our shelter facility. This is due to the fact that our regular shelter is full, there are no openings (for various reasons) at this time at other shelters we usually turn to, and we continue to get emergency referrals. Can we include the estimates for the cost of apartment rental in the budget? We would be able to provide a landlord contact during the contracting period with MOVA.

A: Yes.

Q: Can we include costs related to helping shelter families who are actively looking on their own for their own housing, i.e. rental assistance (security deposit, first & last rent)?

A: Yes.

Q: Can we include the cost of emergency transportation by ambulance in the transportation budget?

A: No, this is unallowable under VOCA.

Q: Can MOVA funds be used to assist with car payments and/or car insurance payments to allow survivors who use their car as a means of income (i.e. Uber, Lyft drivers) to maintain their vehicle?

A: No. This is unallowable.

Q: Staff are using conference call tools that may be out of the scope of their personal phone plan, would this be an allowable cost that can be expended with these funds? Are there flat rates for supporting personal phone plans and internet during this time?

A: Yes, this is allowable. When reimbursing staff for these costs, a flat rate reimbursement for staff on their internet and/or phone bill would be allowable. We encourage each agency to have a policy related to these reimbursements.

Q: Can we purchase a zoom subscription now and transfer the expense to the emergency fund grant once we are approved, or should we wait?

A: Yes, you can purchase it now. After award approval, you will be able to request reimbursement for costs incurred April 1, 2020 and later, however you must wait for your formal award approval to request reimbursement under this grant. We encourage you to look at your current VOCA budget. You may request a budget amendment to support these costs.

Q: Is it possible instead to group by categories of positions, such as counselor/advocate- community and counselor/advocate-shelter, and group together? We would still be using time sheets and time detail for individuals for back-up.

A: Yes, this is allowable. You can group the positions into individual lines in the funding request as you have proposed and include more detail in the narrative which you will be providing. Please keep in mind, you must be able to track the funds related to supporting these positions as this will be checked during monitoring. Additionally, as you noted, when requesting reimbursement, timesheets and other backup must be provided for the specific staff.

Q: Can we include additional costs for our Financial Services firm, as they are going to be doing more work for us to prepare our grant budgets?

A: No.

Q: A number of participants in our Intimate Partner Abuse Education program have reported that they have lost their jobs. Are we able to give them gift cards to help with their family expenses?

A: No.

Q: During the webinar it was mentioned that we could use the emergency funding for allowable expenses even if it was not used for someone on VOCA/SAFEPLAN contracts. Can we do the same with our current funding?

A: No. You may request a budget amendment to your current awards, however, those funds are only to support your current VOCA/SAFEPLAN programming.

Q: Do we submit both a FY20 and FY21 budget on the forms provided?

A: Correct. There is a budget template with match and one without match. Both have tabs for FY20 and FY21.

Q: Can we include anticipated as well as already incurred expenses? What about expenses incurred due to the pandemic before April 1st?

A: Under this grant, costs will be reimbursed from April 1, 2020 on. If you would like to request a budget amendment under your current award, you may do so.

Q: Is MOVA expecting/allowing agencies to request budget amendments for pandemic-related needs such as tele-work expenses as well as applying for the emergency grants for different items?

A: These emergency funds are separate from your current FY20 (and pending FY21) award. We will allow budget amendments to your current award.

Q: Do you have any guidance on how much of the emergency grant request should be for client (food, rent etc.) vs agency support?

A: There is no requirement. Ask for what you anticipate needing.

Q: Are these funds able to cover additional temporary staffing that may assist with direct services to reduce the time on the waitlist when face to face services resume? (ex. pay a staff person from another non-VOCA funded program in our agency 5 hours a week to run groups to help reduce the waitlist for a predetermined number of weeks)

A: Yes, as long as you will be supplementing and not supplanting funds.

Q: Can these funds be used to purchase tablets for clients to provide telehealth services?

A: No.

Q: When providing rental assistance to clients do we access their landlord's information and pay them directly or give cash to the client? Does MOVA have a policy around this process?

A: It is unallowable to provide cash directly to clients, any payments should be made directly to the vendor on behalf of the victim. We do not have a policy surrounding this process.

Q: Will VOCA fund costs related to clients' technology costs?

A: No

Q: Are funds available for items purchased to move to remote work for funded staff in March, such as laptops, cell phones, shredders for home offices, etc. The same question would be true for staff time of tech staff (or consultants) specifically prepping these phones (and the staff who use them) to ensure they can uphold confidentiality standards.

A: This is unallowable. Under the emergency grant, costs will be reimbursed from April 1, 2020 and later. You may revisit your current budget and speak with your grants manager about a budget amendment to cover the costs related to COVID in March.

Q: Our agency has some programs that have not been fully funded through VOCA funds before, including a shelter. Due to Covid related issues, we are relocating shelter guests and incurring many thousands of dollars of additional costs to keep them in a safe place where they can have space to quarantine if needed from other shelter guests. Will relocation costs or temporary costs, such as temporary hotel rooms for these guests be eligible?

A: Yes, as long as these costs have been incurred on April 1, 2020 or later.

Q: Will home health aides for a shelter location be allowable?

A: No.

Q: Will a part time HR staff or consultant to assist with hiring/redeployment of staff, etc be allowable?

A: No.

Q: Can you clarify the difference between the narrative and budget narrative?

A: The budget narrative is the detail provided on each cost within the funding request excel workbook. The brief narrative is a separate document which outlines the costs being requested, along with the reason/need for the costs being requested.

Q: You indicated that we could request funds agency wide as long as they met the requirements of VOCA allowable costs. Are those the costs list on pp.4-6 of the Policies and Procedures Manual?

A: Yes. You can also visit Appendix C for more detailed allowable costs.

Q: How long should the "brief narrative" should be in terms of page limits? Also, please confirm that we primarily need to explain the reasons (in the budget) for our request.

A: The narrative should not exceed 3 pages, and should address the costs being requested and the reasons/need for this request.